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ABSTRACT

This paper describes subjectivism, a new learning paradigm that incorporates successful pedagogic practices from the past into an affect-structured constructivism. Its two goals are student empowerment and subject enculturation. Student empowerment is achieved by designing learning for success so students can take credit for and feel confidence from this success. Subject enculturation attaches professional attitudes, appreciation, and guiding values to the course content. Examples of enculturation processes include peer pressure, social recognition, compliance with authority, shared experience, establishing role identity, in-group bonding, and out-group competition. Student empowerment develops autonomous and self-directed learning. Surface purpose activities (social constructivist activities) use affect-structuring techniques to enhance student empowerment. Three affect-structuring techniques for designing surface purpose activities include: an emotional anchor, a motivator, and cognitive direction. The paper describes how four activities allowed students at the University of the South Pacific, Fiji, to perfect what they planned to say on a television debate. (Contains 24 references.) (SM)

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SUBJECTIVISIM- A LEARNING PARADIGM FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

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Subjectivism - A learning Paradigm for the 21st Century

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Introduction

For the last 20 years of this century Learning theory has been trying to burst the mental boundaries of Cognitivism. Successful educators know that learning is not all in the mind. Yet there has been no theory of learning that has successfully combined the motivation of emotion and the power of affect that we use as good teachers to enhance the cognitive content of our courses. Now there is Subjectivism. Subjectivism is a new learning paradigm. It incorporates successful pedagogic practices from the past into an affect structured constructivism. It recognises the importance of attitudes, values and affect in how we structure our learning. Subjectivism uses powerful attitude change techniques from psycho-Dynamics and Brief Therapy to structure affect for successful learning. The dual Humanistic aims of Subjectivism are (i) Student Empowerment and (ii) Subject Enculturation. Student Empowerment is achieved by designing learning for success so students take credit and confidence from this success. Subject Enculturation attaches professional attitudes, appreciation and guiding values to the course content. This paper uses practical examples of Subjectivist teaching to illustrate the paradigm.

Overview
1. Subjectivism is Constructivism plus Affect
2. It has two aims (i) Enculturation and (ii) Empowerment
3. It uses engrossing activities, called surface purposes, that guarantee learning success.
4. These are designed using affect-structuring techniques that ensure students take the credit for their success.
5. An example is given

Constructivism is a cognitivist philosophy. It lacks the affective concomitants of social learning

Constructivism seems all set to be the philosophy to lead learning into the 21st century. Except for one problem. From Piaget through Bruner to von Glasersfeld, constructivism has a cognitive pedigree (Bruner,1960, 1966; Drescher, 1991; Garrison, 1993; Glasersfeld, 1996; London, 1988; Quartz & Sejnowski, 1996; Sigel & Cocking, 1977; Wadsworth, 1971). It is a cognitive philosophy which gives little consideration to the powerful effects of feeling and emotion that accompany social constructivist learning. Teachers are aware of the powerful multiplying effects that interest, motivation and enjoyment have on student learning and strive to incorporate these powerful affective multiplying factors in to their classrooms (Beebe & Ivy, 1994; Boekaerts, 1988; Sylwester, 1994). Unfortunately, constructivism has had no pedagogy that explained how to use affective adjuncts to cognitive learning in the classroom (Huinker & Madison, 1995; Hwang, 1996; Roblyer, 1996; Savery & Duffy, 1995; Willis, 1995). Subjectivism is a learning paradigm that does do this, that shows teachers how to add the power of affect to constructivist teaching.

Subjectivism focuses on the subjective experience of the learner.

Subjectivism adds feeling and emotion to cognition. It structures the living classroom experience to use the naturally occurring enculturation process students experience out of the classroom in their daily living. It sets up practical classroom learning experiences that are living authentic experiences focused on the subject content. It does this by designing activities that focus on the actual subjective experiences of the individual students.

It structures both the affective and cognitive aspects of constructivist learning

Subjective activities can be simple games that are intended to teach pure rote learning or they can be more complex simulations of some activity that totally engross the students. Whatever the activity, it has two parts (i) a pedagogic purpose and (ii) a surface purpose. The pedagogic purpose is the teacher's specific intention that the students should learn some planned aspect of the syllabus to the limit of their ability. The surface purpose is a distraction from the pedagogic purpose. It is an activity that totally engrosses the students. This paper outlines how to design such activities.

The two aims are (i) Enculturation and (ii) Empowerment

Subjectivism has two aims (i) enculturation and (ii) Empowerment. Enculturation is the intention that the students should learn the culture of the subject - not only the skills and processes but also the guiding aesthetics and beliefs. To give a clearer understanding of this a comparison is now made between the traditional teaching of Mathematics and the teaching

Examples of enculturation processes used are peer pressure, social recognition, compliance with authority, shared experience, establishing role identity, in-group bonding, out-group competition, etc.

of a religion (Bishop, 1991; Tishman, 1993). Traditional teaching of mathematics involves the students in sufficiently learning the facts and processes to be able to accurately reproduce them in an examination. However, when a devotee teaches his or her religion, it is not just the prayers and rituals - equivalent to the fact and processes - that are taught. The students are expected to learn the values and to believe in the religion to the extent that it alters the way they live their lives. This is done by example of right living, by telling stories of the prophets and experiencing the feelings of the religion through enculturation processes such as peer pressure, social recognition, compliance with authority, shared experience, establishing role identity, in-group bonding, out-group competition, etc. (Aidman, 1994; Guild, 1994; Jacobson, 1996; Soldier, 1985). When mathematics is taught in this way students are motivated by stories of great mathematicians, they follow the lecturer's example of right thinking, they experience the wonder and aesthetics of the subject - they become mathematicians. In a similar way students are enculturated into other subject areas.

Empowerment develops autonomous and self-directed learning

The second aim of empowerment is for students to come to know what content and process talents they have in the subject area. Empowerment is realised by students being increasingly able to identify areas that will interest them and ways in which they personally can most effectively learn those areas, that is students increasingly become self-directed learners. To development empowerment the subjectivist lecturer must induct students into a wide variety of content areas and ways of understanding so that the students have sufficient experiences on which to soundly base their growing empowerment.

Surface purpose activities use affect-structuring techniques to enhance student empowerment (design guarantees success and students take credit for their success)

In practice, the subjectivist teacher empowers students by designing activities that will result in their success. However, the hand of the teacher is so well hidden, that the students take complete credit for their success and so feel empowered. Three techniques that are used to accomplish empowerment are: (i) affect-structuring (ii) covert directives and (iii) self-cuing coping strategies. These techniques are mainly methods that have been adapted from Brief Theory change processes and applied to the two aims of Subjectivism. Affective structuring techniques utilise strong affect for directed motivation towards surface purposes. Covert directives are techniques that deal with the problem that extensive direction is necessary in teaching yet extensive direction undermines empowerment. The subjective solution is to use covert directives. Self-cuing coping strategies are meta-cognitive-affective processes that can be consciously initiated by the student. For example, the student can initiate the mental set required for 'critical evaluation' or for 'on-task concentration'. The learner is empowered because the initiation of these states of awareness, that are necessary for different aspects of learning, become under the learner's conscious direction.

Three affect-structuring techniques for designing surface purpose activities (i) an emotional anchor (ii) a motivator, and (iii) cognitive direction -

There is only space in this paper to briefly illustrate how three affective-structuring techniques are used to design surface-purposes. These three affect-structuring are:
(i) The emotional anchor - this ensures the relevance of all learning states
(ii) The motivator - this implies success, recognises ownership, and gives an entrance to the activity
(iii) The cognitive direction - this guides students in organising their tasks and guides then as to what information is relevant to the tasks.

Four activities allowed students to perfect what they chose to say for a TV debate

The example that will be used in illustration is a Speak French workshop held at the University of the South Pacific at the time of the French nuclear testing in the Pacific (Boufoy-Bastick, 1996). The subjective teacher's pedagogic purpose was for the students to learn and practise an argument register in French. The surface purpose must serve a student need. The students felt very strongly about the issue of nuclear testing in the Pacific and were demonstrating in the capital of Fiji against the French nuclear testing programme. This suggested a need that the surface purpose could serve. The surface purpose was for students to affirm their disapproval of nuclear testing in the Pacific. The emotional anchor 'to get them involved and fired-up' was a five minute video clip of a nuclear test on one of their Pacific 'paradise' islands. The Motivator was a News clip of a US General and students being interviewed about the testing. This had been prepared before the workshop using some of the student who were attending the workshop. By videoing the students being interviewed on the same

Practising what they chose guaranteed their success. TV debate gave social recognition. This is an enculturation process (like peer review) that confirmed student's standard
Finally a ballot, guaranteed to affirm their views, completed the surface purpose

footing as the US General it implied that they have equal authority and ability to speak on TV about the issue. The cognitive direction was a sudden stark silent black and white 'still' Overlaid with "FOR OR AGAINST" in French.

The workshop consisted of four activities that allowed each student to continuously perfect what they chose to say for a TV debate - which was foreshadowed by the video clip. This design, allowing them to choose and practise what they want to say, ensured their success. The TV debate was set-up so that each student could have his/her say socially recognised by the class and then ratified by a 'public ballot'. Social recognition, like peer review, is an enculturation process that confirms that the student has achieved an accepted standard. The outcome of the ballot was certain to be in their favour. This certain success was to reward their participation in the lesson by giving them the result they all wanted - to express their disapproval of nuclear testing in the Pacific and so fulfil the surface purpose of the workshop.

The lesson is a success when students only refer to liking or disliking the surface purposes.

The assessment of the pedagogic purposes of the lesson are by traditional means. However, the assessment of the success of the Subjectivist aspects of the lesson are by asking the students what they liked and/or disliked about the lesson. If the lesson is a subjectivist success then the students should only mention liking and/or disliking the surface purposes. The classroom management behind the pedagogic purpose should be so much out of their awareness that none of those aspects are mentioned.

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